

Podski's Hole

A Play in Two Acts

by

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## Podski's Hole

The plays' developmental history.

Ludwig Wittgenstein is thought of by many as the most important and influential philosopher of the 20th century, yet his influence may not be obvious. His first published work, which solved most of the philosophical challenges of the 18th and 19th centuries, was written during World War One while Wittgenstein was fighting the Russians in the trenches. Podski's Hole was inspired by his proposition that "an imagined world has a form in common with the real world" and that "a picture presents a situation in logical space." I placed Edward Hopper's 1942 iconic picture "The Nighthawks" with its theme of existential loneliness alongside my archetypal character Podski (a 20th century everyman). Podski's intention to survive despite politics, war and deprivation while the characters in Nighthawks want to be free to experience all the world has to offer. These two imaginary worlds, one representative of a European tradition and the other of the New World, are surrounded by the indiscriminate and timeless conflicts of 20th century warfare which clash in the theatre. Podski's survival tactics are tested to the extreme. How does one survive in a world apparently intent on either blowing itself up or polluting itself to death? Both worlds explore a timeless human predicament of being caught between history and one's own time. Podski's world is not only invaded by the characters from Hopper's painting with disturbing results but by Wit himself who is focused on his effectiveness as a soldier and his philosophical concerns. Hesh, a young orphan of the storm, struggles to survive by hiding in Podski's hole and eventually is discovered and adopted by Podski. The characters in the painting, freed from the stasis of their picture, solve some of their problems but return to their lonely and more dependable canvas world. It is the eternal conflict between life and art. Podski and Hesh, though characters in a play and caught in a timeless repetitive action, must return to a world in a process of change just as the theatre goes must

return to their own world and like Podski and Hesh wrestle with the problems of survival and uncertainty . As Wittgenstein put it, "the mystical is not how the world is but that it exists."

### Characters

Podski

Wit

Woman in the Red Dress

Hesh

Man 1

Man 2

Edward Hopper's painting Nighthawks is projected on to the back of the stage. The scene is a trench full of assorted pieces of rubbish. On the top of either side of the trench is barbed wire a la WW1. Upstage centre is a wooden barricade attached to which is a small broken mirror and a shelf with shaving gear and soap. Downstage there are assorted old ammunition boxes. An arm sticks out of the trench wall and supports an old raincoat and gas mask. As the lights come up there's the sound of rats squeaking and scratching. The rubbish moves as if a rat is moving across the stage under the rubbish.

male VOICE

(from stage left, grainy ,volume varies, electronic buzz distorts)

In the name of the Fatherland and all we hold dear to family and hearth, here on this hallowed spot, we throw our bodies down as sacrifice to the ideals of freedom, democracy and justice. No sacrifice is too great, no burden too heavy, no task too onerous, no obligation or duty too weighty to prevent us finding the courage to stand and fight. Better to die free men and women than subject ourselves to the domination of an evil and tyrannical oppressor.

female VOICE

(from stage right higher pitch, distorted)

Generation upon generation we have stood and endured the sufferings and the wrongs of foreign and barbaric hordes. They have taken our land, violated our women, enslaved our children, humiliated us at every turn. By all that is sacred and holy, by the blood shed by our ancestors, let us throw our bodies willingly at the enemy. Let the spilling of our blood be testament to the righteousness of our cause.

There is the sound of bullets whistling overhead and shells bursting in the distance. From the pile of rubbish beneath the walls of the trench emerges a head.

PODSKI

Shit. Overslept. Damn it. Alright. I heard you. Noisy bastards. No respect for the living.

A smoking piece of shrapnel or grenade drops on stage.  
Podski picks it up and hurls it off stage.

Keep your damn grenades out of my living room. Vous comprenez?... sie verstehen?... well not so much a living room, more a sort of..... living space. Welcome to my hole. My name's Podski, a ridiculous name, I know, parental prerogative... Handed down with a sack of bones. I would like to have been called Spencer, or Himmelstein but Podski's what I got.

He starts to ferret among the rubbish.

Hah! Look what the wind's blown in. It's always the same. Every day I prepare for something better and every day it just gets worse. More rubbish. You would think people would pay attention to what they throw away but it's like their crap, flush it away, out of sight, out of mind. No pride of ownership. Ah well. C'est la vie.

MALE VOICE

Forward citizens of the world. Embrace your fate. Show courage. You are your country. God is on your side. You are the sum of all your actions. Destiny awaits you.

PODSKI

Wonderful words. Inspiring words. That's all I hear. Good words.

Female VOICE

Though your wounds bleed, though your bodies ache, remember we must all die some day. Dying gives a dignity to our lives, it gives purpose, it gives meaning to history. Your death will be remembered. Allons enfants.

The firing reaches a crescendo and then dies away.

CRY 1

A man dying cries out in pain.  
Aaaaaaa....Mo....ther.

PODSKI

Men dying in battle invariably cry for their mothers. Depressing. Isn't it? You think they would remember something uplifting, ennobling. "The rest is silence." That's Hamlet. There's a man who knew how to die properly. Leave the question open and take as many of the them with you as you can. Don't cry for your mother like you want to crawl back into the womb. Give them something to think about.

CRY 2

Damn you, you bastards.

PODSKI

Better, but not very original. Dying properly requires a degree of study. I have a book somewhere. Famous Last Words. I would like to share some of them with you. They're hilarious.

He ferrets around in the rubbish looking for his book.

I can't find it. It's so difficult to keep track of everything. All this decay. All this confusion.

He pauses and thinks.

Oh! I forgot myself.

With joy.

Time for Breakfast.

He finds a small box in which there are rolled up packages. The contents are vague but apparently edible and he begins to chew on one of them.

Sustenance. One of those universal jokes.

He sings and dances

Eating and a' sleeping,  
Dying and a' weeping,  
Peeing and excreting,  
Storing and a' keeping.  
This is the way of the world.  
This is the way of the world.

He stops singing

I make it a rule to always have tomorrow's food. That way, you have hope. Knowing that you can survive for another twenty four hours is a sort of comfort. Mastication! Gets the whole system moving.

If you don't eat, you don't fart and if you don't fart, you don't shit, regularly that is ... and if you don't shit, you're dead. And if you're dead, you're not here. You're somewhere else and let's face it, nobody really gives a shit about the dead.

He whispers conspiratorily

Your soul they care about... they sing hymns, ... they say prayers...wrap you up nice and tight... salute a flag. You're manageable.

Soft mournful singing is heard.

And it makes the living feel good. Isn't that nice? All sad and dignified and righteous. Who cares if you really died from gangrene of the balls as long as the music sounds mournful. But enough of this morbidity. The sun is rising on another day. Life begins again. It is time to set my lands in order.

He begins to search the rubbish. He assembles it into little piles. He ad libs with the audience about the rubbish. He looks about suspiciously. He checks the piles. Suddenly he jumps round as if there is someone behind him.

Got you.

He seizes the remnants of an old army uniform from the middle of a pile of rubbish, wrestles it to the ground. He fights it.

Take that. And that. What?

He screams at it and stamps on it.

Nothing .... nothing.... nothing will come of nothing.

With relief

For a minute I thought we had an intruder. It happens sometimes. A deserter. Someone who can't take it. 'I want to live. I want to go home.' Next thing they're in front of a firing squad. If you understand that then you know what to do and that keeps you alive. I know, I know.... You didn't come here tonight to be lectured to. Look! Look! Look there.... Did you see that? It must be new. It wasn't there before. Look at it. I would never use that.

He takes a wrapper or old worn artefact placed in the audience.

What was it used for? Does anybody care? I don't. But remember, it might be useful in the future. Someone might dig it up in a thousand years and think it's important. In four million, it will be a miracle. You never know. I always believe in being cautious.

He looks around at the new arrangement  
This place is definitely looking more orderly. Don't you agree? I am finally in control!

He pauses

A bugle sounds.

Listen. First they try to kill each other, then they sit down and talk. The routine never changes but whatever you do, don't relax your guard. Let me show you.

He rummages around and brings out a pile of old helmets. This is my collection. Interesting shapes. They're always losing them. They make good saucepans and collanders... The ones with the bullet holes that is. I use these as plant pots... for my herb garden and of course they are excellent for the collection and removal of you know what. Most importantly you can use them to tell if things are going well.

He puts one helmet on a stick and puts it up above the parapet. There's a sharp rifle report and a clang.  
Bullseye. That means they're going to have another go at each other. Time to hide.

Male VOICE

Perfide. Perfide. Traison. Traison!

FEMale VOICE

Armez vous. Armez vous.

Male VOICE

Achtung! Achtung! Kill the enemy. Defend yourselves.



## FEMale VOICE

Courage

Sound of bullets and cries and then a soldier in WW1 Austrian uniform jumps into the trench and takes up a position with his rifle bayonet attached . He is calm and collected and takes up a position at the back of the stage aiming his rifle over the side of the trench and waiting. There is a pause.

PODSKI

Raising his head out of a pile of rubbish.  
Excuse me? This is private property.

WIT

Without moving. He has a slight German accent  
No such thing.

PODSKI

This is my hole.

WIT

Real estate.

PODSKI

What do you mean?

WIT

Value determined by desirability and economic outlook. Look out.

He takes aim and fires.

Presently this is a piece of strategic real estate.  
Highly valued if I am not mistaken.

He fires again.

PODSKI

You're not frightened.

WIT

Why should I be?

PODSKI

Someone's trying to kill you.

WIT

I am a soldier. Soldiers are trained to kill each other. My job is to kill the enemy whoever he may be...

PODSKI

But.....

WIT

Please excuse me for being impertinent but what are you doing here?

PODSKI

This is my home.

WIT

A risky choice if you don't mind my saying.

PODSKI

Not the greatest location, but it's my home. I feel safe.

WIT

From what?

PODSKI

From death.

WIT

But you are going to die, aren't you?

PODSKI

Thank you very much for that insight. Did you need to tell me that?

WIT

I see.

Pause

You are only concerned about the timing.

PODSKI

YOU are getting on my nerves.

WIT

Look out!

He dives on top of Podski. There's a shot. Wit then takes up a different firing position and fires.

Got him. We flushed him out.

PODSKI

You just killed ...No.... You just saved... I don't know what you did.

WIT

Don't look for meaning, look for use.

PODSKI

What are you, a bloody philosopher?

WIT

Well...I am a Seeker of Truth, at the moment a fighting soldier in the midst of attempting to solve philosophical problems. I think we can relax now.

PODSKI

Well, Mr. Seeker of Truth ... Though deeply appreciative of your saving my life, I might add that if you hadn't come into my hole, Mr. Sniper over there, who is now returning to his original state of philosophical nothingness, would still be alive and would have returned to the bosom of his wife and family.

WIT

That is interesting. But remember, each of us is locked into our own version of the truth just as we are locked into our biological time frame. That's it! That's it damn it!

PODSKI

What is?

WIT

How far can you see?

PODSKI

As far as I want to.

WIT

That's it, you can see as far as you want to.

PODSKI

Yes.

WIT

So you can live as long as you want to. Life has no end.

PODSKI

What do you mean?

WIT

Whoever lives in this moment lives eternally. Like a painting.

PODSKI

But what about the sniper?

WIT

He shakes Podski and embraces him  
Don't you see? Death is not an event in life.  
Eternity is when time does not exist.

PODSKI

I don't understand.

WIT

Let me explain. When a baby opens its eyes, what does it see?

PODSKI

It's parents?

WIT

It sees an object; it learns to recognise that object, be it a face, or a toy or the side of its crib. The object is its meaning. Like this hole. These objects, the ammunition boxes, the helmets, the paper, the rubbish are facts which combine together into a state of affairs.

PODSKI

So?

WIT

So the state of affairs is the truth. Even though we give the objects words, the words themselves are unreliable, they shift and change their meaning. But the objects and their relationship to each other express philosophical truth.

PODSKI

I don't see where this is going.

WIT

The world is everything that is the case.

PODSKI

Well that is obvious.

WIT

This must be the premise for any discussion of meaning. In fact, as I said, don't look for meaning, look for use.

PODSKI

I always do. If it's not useful, out it goes.

WIT

My friend this conversation has been delightfully invigorating. I must get back to my lines to write it down. What is your name?

PODSKI

Podski.

WIT

A good name. My name is Wit. I am delighted to have made your acquaintance.

PODSKI

Yes, but....

WIT

I have to leave and resume being a soldier. You have helped me. I thank you. Hopefully I shall return the favor.

He comes to attention and salutes.  
Now it is goodbye.

PODSKI

Yes.... well.... Um... glad to .... I'm a bit short of food but thank you for saving my .....

Wit interrupts

WIT

If I hadn't come, your life would not have needed saving. Goodbye and Good luck.

Exit by climbing up over the parapet wall stage right.

PODSKI

Yes... Goodbye... And good luck to you.

Despondently

It's always the same. You just get to know someone... Pouf.... They disappear. He is not the first and won't be the last.

The bugle sounds.

Ah cease fire. Time for an afternoon nap and some peace.

He pauses

Don't look for meaning, look for use. I like that. Strange fellow. Bright eyes. Very cerebral.....mmm. Start with the object when there's two it's a state of affairs. This is no longer a hole full of rubbish, it is a state of affairs. Sounds a great deal better. Not sure about this killing people though. How can you justify killing someone? Me? I've never killed anyone. I've never done any man harm, nor woman for that matter or child as far as I know.

There's a rustling underneath the piles of rubbish behind Podski's back. He freezes.

There it goes again. Did you hear it? The minute I turn my back, it starts again. There's someone there. Come out damn you!

He turns and pounces on the rubbish and stirs it up into a little storm and becomes partly buried himself but finds nothing. There's a sound of sad humming stage left from the direction Wit shot the sniper. Podski stops, listens then disentangles himself from the rubbish and peers up over the edge of the trench.

That's extremely sad. His friends are collecting the body. They're looking pissed off.

He ducks

Make that very pissed off. You shouldn't go around stirring things up. This has made my position extremely precarious.

Male VOICE

I charge you in the name of your fallen comrade to look into your souls. Was this right? Did our brother have to die? He gave his life for an ideal. He gave his life for a purpose. He stands with all the soldiers of the past who have sacrificed themselves for the greater good of our society.

FEMale VOICE

We have defended ourselves against the enemy . We do not seek conflict but we will not permit our lives and property to be subject to the aggression of others. We will defend our freedoms and the right to live our lives in the ways that we decide.

PODSKI

That means trouble.

He grabs a helmet.

Male Soldier VOICE

Fire.

FEMale soldier VOICE

Fire.

Sound of artillery pieces going off. Thunderous noise. Shells whistling overhead. The sound of explosions. Sound of shrapnel whistling through the air.

Male soldier VOICE

Fire.

FEMALE soldier VOICE

Fire.

PODSKI

As soon as they get the range, we're in for.....

More explosions. Smoke pours into the trench.  
Gas?

He grabs an old gas mask and struggle to put it on.  
Luckily I kept this.

His voice becomes unintelligible. There's the sound of someone coughing. A few more shells whistle overhead. Then there is an eerie silence. Podski looks to the left then to the right. He takes a bit of cardboard and fans the smoke. He stops bends down and picks a dead rat out of the rubbish and holds it by the tail. He flicks it. The mouse does not respond. He flicks it again.

Dead. Very dead.

MALE soldier VOICE

Cease fire.

FEMALE soldier VOICE

Cease fire.

PODSKI

Thank God for that.

He removes mask .

We will have to bury you ... On the other hand...

Mmmm....



He goes to one of his pots and places the mouse in it. There's a sound of falling timbers from the back of the trench as if the wall is subsiding. Through the dust and rubble appears a voluptuous woman in a red evening dress picking her way over the timbers through the smoke.

Woman in red dress

Oh my God. What a dump!

She hitches up her skirt and spots Podski.

Well, aren't you going to help me?

Podski doesn't move.

What's the matter? Haven't you ever seen a woman before?

PODSKI

Of course. I mean, it's just.. It's just..

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

It's just what?

PODSKI

It's just.... Unexpected.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Where the hell am I?

PODSKI

You're in my hole... my state of affairs. It's where I live. It's in a war zone.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

It looks like a pig sty.

PODSKI

It was tidy this morning. Everything was ... I got everything in order but as usual there were interruptions... And then well .. Being in a war zone.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Life is one big war zone and don't ever forget it. Wow what a relief.

PODSKI

Relief?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Got a chair?

PODSKI

Well not exactly.

He goes to the back and fishes out an ammunition box.  
I use these.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I've been so used to sitting that at first standing was a relief. Now all I want is to sit down. These shoes are killing me.

Pause. Podski looks about him in a rather embarrassed way.  
Got a cigarette?

PODSKI

No. Sorry!

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

How about a drink?

PODSKI

No. Sorry. I have some water left over from the last rain storm.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

How do you survive in a dump like this?

PODSKI

I get by.

WIRD searches in her handbag and pulls out a packet of cigarettes.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Thank God. I only have a few left. But a few's enough. Got a light?

PODSKI

She lights her cigarette and draws on it with great satisfaction

Umm... That's good. Really, really good.

PODSKI

Haven't smelled that in a long time. I had an uncle who.....

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

You know, this place isn't so bad after all. It's kinda nice to find a place that looks so lived in. Back in the picture I'm used to neatness.

PODSKI

It's home.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Uh huh..

She draws on the cigarette with pleasure  
Just to move around. No glass wall. No bright lights.  
I hate neon lights. Don't you hate neon lights?

PODSKI

I never really thought about them. It would be nice to have a roof over your head. When it rains... you know.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Nah! Much better to have the open sky. Freedom.

Pause

Are you staring at my tits?

PODSKI

No! No! I was.... It's such a surprise. ... I don't have a lot of visitors. And well .. You look good... Beautiful in fact .....

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

No big deal. You're born with the right curves and men come sniffing like pigs on a truffle hunt. The more you pretend not to know what they're after, the hotter they get.

PODSKI

Phew! Well..... Er!. Yes. Yes and Yes. Ha! Ha! Ha!

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Ha? Are you all right?

PODSKI

Yes!

Silence

Yes!

Sadly

I'm all right

WIRD finishes her cigarette and stubs it out in the ashtray Podski has.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Not much of a man are you?

PODSKI

That depends on what you mean by manliness. I can in a modest way provide for a companion. There is enough here ...for two people to sustain a reasonable existence.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Reasonable!

PODSKI

There are worse places.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Listen buddy boy. I've spent most of my life behind a glass wall, at a counter in a cheap diner with people who cannot or who do not want to change while being stared at by a bunch of morons. Before that I was gonna be in the movies. You know the movies... moving pictures? The talkies? Why don't you come up and see me sometime? (a la Mae West) Where have you been dumb ass? I haven't broken free from that picture to spend my life in some sort of open air slum.

PODSKI

A slum?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Yeah! Look at this mess.

PODSKI

He is hurt

It's all relative. Mine's an organized mess.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Organized or not, this is not where I want to be. I'm leaving. Now, how do I get out of here? You got telephones?

PODSKI

There are no telephones and it's fairly dangerous out there. Just stay here with me.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Does this way lead anywhere?

Points stage left.

PODSKI

That's East Bratislavia

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

And that way?

Points stage right

PODSKI

West Bratislavia.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Which way is more interesting?

PODSKI

Difficult to say. .... one bad winter when I had a touch of frostbite I went to East Bratislavia to find a doctor. I finally found one but he wouldn't see me without money which I didn't have so I came back and recovered.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

West Bratislavia?

PODSKI

My mother came from there.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Then West it is.

She removes her shoes and throws them DL with the rubbish.

I don't know who invented high heels but he sure caused a lot of pain. These shoes have gotta go. What's your name?

PODSKI

Podski.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

If anyone follows me Podski, send them the opposite way. Do you understand? I am off to see the what's out there in the big bad world. I'm off to be a star. I'd luv to kiss ya, but I just washed my hair. ... see ya Mr. Podski (a la Marilyn Monroe with kiss)

Exit

PODSKI

A good looking woman. Very attractive. I've heard of moving pictures.. Looks like life but it isn't. I try hard to stay out of other people's lives.....

He sits exhausted

My mother always taught me to mind my own business and to concentrate on the essentials.... This has not been a good day. A good day is one that passes without interruption, one you can comfortably forget. Other people always have problems and end up giving me a headache. I went for a holiday once and I was miserable, the food was bad, the weather too hot, sand in your swimming costume and those nasty creepy crawly things.

Spies a piece of rubbish, a picture of an idyllic tropical island. Grabs it.

I am perfectly happy dealing with pictures. Look at that....

Calm blue seas, happy holiday makers in swimsuits, smiling natives, the wild scent of frangipani, the never ending line of surf and the palm trees waving ..this picture is all the holiday I need....  
reality complicates everything.

There's a commotion behind him under the rubbish. Podski ,with a yell of triumph pounces, dives into the melee, rubbish goes everywhere, there's a lot of shouting and shrieks. It's like getting hold of a live fish. Hesh punches Podski.

PODSKI

Got you. AT LAST. Got you. Do you know what the punishment is for trespassing in someone's home?

He holds the kid by the back of the neck and pushes him downstage

What's your name?

Silence

What's your name?

Hesh

You're hurting me.

PODSKI

Stop struggling.

He ties a piece of old rope loosely round him.

Stand there.... What do you mean by invading the privacy of a man's home, unsettling his nerves. What is your name?

Hesh

Hesh

PODSKI

Hesh? What sort of name is that?

Hesh

I don't know sir. It's what my uncle always called me.

PODSKI

Don't you have parents?

Hesh

No, sir. Not to my knowledge.

PODSKI

Where do you live?

Hesh

Nowhere sir. Well... here for the last two months.

PODSKI

Two months. Here? Rent Free? May I remind you that this is not a guest house. It is where I live. You are an intruder.

Hesh

I know sir. I'm sorry. I have learned to live quietly. Please don't hurt me.

PODSKI

All right. All right. Calm down. I am sorry I was a bit rough. Sit down.

He fetches ammunition case

You look frightened and very thin. You're probably hungry. I'll get you something to eat.

He goes to his little store. Puts the dead mouse aside. Pulls out edible object unwraps it and gives it to Hesh  
How old are you?

Hesh

I think I am about 12.

PODSKI

Are you a boy or a girl? It's difficult to tell.

Hesh

I don't know Sir.



PODSKI

What do you mean you don't know?

Hesh

I don't know. No one has ever asked me that question before.

PODSKI

But you must know. I mean you know when you pee can you er.. direct it or... you know..

Hesh

I don't know sir... you see....

Sounds of falling timbers and masonry from upstage center.

Man 1

This way. There's a way out. I can see the sky. Grab that beam. Hoist yourself up.

Man 2

I can't do it. I'm too weak. I've been stuck in the painting for sixty years. My muscles must have deteriorated .

Man 1

You can make it.

Man 2

If I ever find the guy who painted me into that damn picture, I'm gonna put him through a meat grinder. Give me a hand .

Man 1

You didn't need to shoot the waiter. He wasn't doin' nothin'.

Man 2

You ain't been starin' at that guy's white uniform for sixty years! It was gettin' on my nerves.

PODSKI

Hide kid.

Hesh dives underneath the rubbish.

Good evening gentlemen.

Both men react and pull guns from holsters.

Man 2

What the hell!

Man 1

Who are you?

PODSKI

Podski sir. This is my hole.

Man 2

Podski's Hole. What kind of a dumb ass lives in a hole.

PODSKI

Accommodation is somewhat limited in this part of the world as you may discover.

Man 1

Ask him about the broad.

Man 2

Did you see a good looking broad in a red dress? She's a friend of ours.

PODSKI

No Sir. What would a good looking broad er.. woman in a red dress be doing in a place like this?

Man 2

She came out the same way we did so you should have seen her.

PODSKI

I saw no one.

Man 2

Wouldn't like a little reminder would you?

He brandishes his gun.

Let's see a smile on your face.

He shoots Podski three times. Podski falls back into the rubbish.

Man 1

What ya do that for? He ain't done nothing.

Man 2

He's lying. See the red shoes. She was wearin' 'em. I hate people who tell lies. As far as I'm concerned lies are death. He's just a nobody, a tramp. Who gives a shit about a down and out?

There's the sound of soldiers shouting.

Let's get outta here. She left the shoes over here so I figure she's gone this way.

MAN 1

You gotta do somethin's about this shooting people all the time. It's a bad habit.

MAN 2

Hey . Shootin' people cleans things up. It establishes a new order, revitalizes the status quo. I read that somewhere. Makes people think about what's important. Shooting someone is nice and clean. You ain't beatin's their brains out with a club or makin' holes in them with a knife... We ain't chopping 'em up and feedin' them to our friends. A couple of bullets near the heart and they're done for. He told a lie. He's an adult. He should know better.

Man 1

Alright, alright... I ain't gonna argue with you.... we'll try to follow the broad... maybe she know what she's doing.

Man 2

Yeah. She probably knows where to go for food and a hotel. She's your friend. You've been sitting next to her in that painting. It's good to be out of that painting. Come on.

Exeunt

Silence

Hesh emerges from his hiding place in the rubbish and crawls towards the body of Podski. The light is fading. He tries to turn the body round, struggles. There is blood.

Hesh

Don't die Mister Podski. Please don't die. Please don't die.

From the battle field the soft voices of soldiers. Some just hum. Hesh puts rubbish on Podski to hide him.

When this lousy war is over,  
 No more soldiering for me,  
 When I get my civvy clothes on,  
 Oh, how happy I shall be!  
 No more church parades on Sunday,  
 No more putting in for leave, I shall  
 kiss the sergeant-major,  
 How I'll miss him, how he'll grieve!

Tune: 'What a friend we have in Jesus')

Lights fade.

## ACT 2.

It is morning. There is a mound centre stage, half submerged in the rubbish. The mound stirs and sits up. It is Podski. seemingly none the worse for wear.

PODSKI

Steel plate... Well baking pan.

He demonstrates.

You don't live in a hole like this without some form of protection. Mind you one bullet caught my arm.

He points to a brown stained cloth on his arm.

I'll survive. It's not the first time.

He looks around with satisfaction.

It's quiet. A good sign. Let's hope it stays that way. Where's that Hesh?

He shouts

Come out wherever you are. I'm not chasing you. I have a job for you.

The rubbish stirs. Hesh emerges.

It's time for breakfast.

He goes to the small box and takes two rolled up packages and gives one to Hesh.

Here. There's water in the helmet over there.

He points in the other direction

The helmets over there are for the other business.  
Never get them confused.

Hesh

Thank you Sir.

PODSKI

Good hygiene is important for a long and happy life.  
My mother taught me that.

He chews.

After breakfast I want you to find out where that woman and those two men came from yesterday. They came from somewhere round here. There's a hole. You understand?

Hesh

Yes Sir.

PODSKI

Climb down and see what you can find. Take care and don't do anything foolish.

Hesh

No Sir.

PODSKI

Off you go. That's it. "Worm" your way in.

Exit Hesh down the hole at the back of the stage.

Still quiet out there.

Reveille sounds.

Mmm.... That's unusual.

He gets his helmet and stick and puts it up level with the trench.

They've stopped shooting. Perhaps we're in for a period of relative peace.

Sudden commotion and Wit jumps into the hole. He is unarmed and carries a backpack. Podski hides.

WIT

Podski?

Silence

Podski

PODSKI

Defensively

What do you want?

WIT

There you are. Relax. They've signed an armistice. All hostilities end at 11 o'clock this morning. I've brought you some supplies. You looked as if you might need them.

He indicates the area. Podski just looks confused and distracted.

Hello?

Podski looks far away.

Supplies. Look. Bread, cheese, two bottles of wine, a First Aid kit, smelling salts, a blanket and these are railways passes, just write your name in and the destination. They will get you wherever you want to go.

PODSKI

It's been such a long time since I have seen such things...

WIT

My unit is moving out soon so I won't be able to make it back. I wanted to thank you for helping me.

Hesh appears out of the hole at the back from the painting and stands

HESH

Mr Podski!

WIT

Who's that?

PODSKI

Hesh has been living here for a while. We also had some visitors yesterday who appeared from nowhere during the bombardment so I sent him to go and see where they had come from.

WIT

How strange. Who were they?

PODSKI

There was a woman in a red dress and two men. I didn't catch their names. One of them shot me.

WIT

Shot you?

PODSKI

Small calibre. I was wearing armor. The woman went that way and the men the other way ...she mentioned something about a diner and neon lights and moving pictures. They had accents..... she was extremely good looking though a little vulgar.

WIT

In the middle of a battlefield?

PODSKI

Didn't seem logical.

WIT

If you saw them it was logical.



PODSKI

They didn't belong.

WIT

Were they coming back?

PODSKI

I don't think so.

WIT

To Hesh

What did you find out?

Hesh

There was a long room surrounded by glass with no exit and a counter with food under it and a man lying down in a white uniform. He had been shot. It was night outside and the lights were bright. There were some metal containers on the side.

WIT

To Hesh

Show me.

Hesh

It was difficult to get through.

WIT

I see. I see. There's definitely a light.

PODSKI

What on earth is happening?

WIT

I don't know. Sometimes the world feels like a dream and anything can happen in dreams.

PODSKI

This ? A dream? I beg your pardon. Is this wourd a dream? Is my hole a dream? I breathe in it.

I sleep in it. I eat in it. I live in it. Day follows night, night follows day. There's a pattern I understand.

WIT

Please don't get upset. The sum total of reality is the world. Like you I am trying to accommodate this alternative imaginative world with the world that I see around me.

PODSKI

I saw a woman in a red dress and two men and one of them shot me. See. That's real.

He points to the wound.

WIT

But the woman and the men are now only memory. The wound is real and a consequence of a remembered action.

PODSKI

It hurts.

WIT

It is impossible to determine the truth or falseness of either this or the picture which your young friend described. Each is a state of affairs and either can be true or false. What is the relationship between the real world and the imagined world?

PODSKI

There are consequences in the real world.

WIT

You are right but the form of the imagined world follows the logic of the real world. A picture presents a situation in logical space.

PODSKI

Picture...!. That's what one of them said. He'd been stuck in a picture for sixty years. I remember now. The man who shot me.

WIT

Then my theory holds. A picture ,whether we hold it in our heads or before our eyes is comprised of objects which have to comply with the logic of the real world visually or emotionally. That's it! Podski, my friend , you are a genius. Another problem solved. Let me embrace you.

PODSKI

I do not embrace anyone at least not until I have had a bath.

WIT

Very well. I have to get back to my unit which is pulling out. Here is my card with my home address. I hope you will visit me. You will have as many baths as you wish, and my servants to scrub your back and take care of you and your wound. As for this picture and its reality we will keep it as a shared world equally as valid as any imagined world. I will forever be indebted to you for helping me solve not one but two major philosophical problems. I hope to publish my findings after the war. Take care of yourself and visit me. Goodbye.

Exit over the wall of the trench.

PODSKI

Objects, reality, state of affairs ! That man's very strange but look what he brought... the wine looks good. Chateau de Goudot 1906... a good year. And the cheese. Oh cheese. And fresh bread. And a bottle opener. That's what I call genius. He didn't forget the bottle opener. Why this is heaven. Come Hesh. Fetch the cups. Sit here. Let's celebrate. You have brought me good fortune and I feel optimistic. A first aid kit could be very useful and train passes. We mustn't lose these in all this rubbish. We must keep hold of the important things. Here drink. A little wine...this is a good day.

There is a commotion off stage right.

## WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Off stage

The bastards. The filthy fucking bastards. Help me someone. Will someone help me?

She staggers on stage, her dress torn and wrinkled, her lipstick badly smudged, her hair dishevelled.

The bastards. Here help me. Or are you one of them?

PODSKI

One of who?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Those murderers, those scum, they're stinking filth. They don't deserve to be called men.

PODSKI

The name's Podski. We met before. Do you remember? Please... sit here.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

This isn't what I expected. I wanted to escape. I dreamed of getting out and now this.

PODSKI

What?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Just to get out, get away, breathe a bit of fresh air, see daylight on my skin.

PODSKI

What is wrong?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I'm hurt.

PODSKI

I have a first aid kit. Where are you hurt?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

The bastards held me down. It took five of them. I scratched their damned faces though. My nighthawks will gouge their eyes out.

She cries

PODSKI

There are bandages here.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I want them dead - all of them.

She cries.

This isn't what I expected.

PODSKI

Here. Let me help you. Keep calm. We have some bread and wine. The bread is fresh. You're still alive. It's all right. Hesh, get her some wine.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I've always been a positive kind of gal, looking on the bright side. So what if men were attracted to me. I couldn't help that. I just wanted a chance in life. I wanted to be in the movies. I'm as good as the rest. I can act. I was sure that sooner or later my opportunity, my moment would come.

She takes the glass from Hesh

PODSKI

Maybe this is your moment.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

My moment?

PODSKI

Yes.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

It's disgusting.

PODSKI

Drink a little wine.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Thanks.

PODSKI

Hesh , get the blanket. Here put this round you. I have to warn you that two men came looking for you.

They saw your shoes and thought you had gone in that direction.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

My nighthawks?

PODSKI

What?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Were they wearing fedoras?

PODSKI

Yes . They both looked alike but one of them shot me.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Shot you?

PODSKI

Not badly.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I'm so tired..

PODSKI

Would you like some bread and cheese. Hesh ....This is Hesh.

Hesh

Delighted to meet you ma'am.

PODSKI

Hesh's been living with me for a while. A non-paying house guest as it were.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I 've never been around children. I apologize for my appearance. Everything is so unreal. This is good .  
(Referring to the wine)

PODSKI

A gift from the Gods. Do you feel better?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Much better. Can I have another glass of wine?

PODSKI

Slightly reluctantly

By all means. There, you're improving already. You'll be better in no time.

A bugler sounds.

It's 11 o'clock. The war's over.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I didn't even know there was one. I know I insulted your place yesterday. I feel bad about that. I'm just not used to people being kind.

PODSKI

Kindness never did much for me.

He laughs ruefully

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

So, is there another way out of here?

PODSKI

The railway station is twenty miles away, that's if there are any trains running. Or you could go back the way you came.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I don't know. I was so lonely.

PODSKI

Hesh said there was food there, a sort of cafe. Perhaps you could rest there.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Maybe.

PODSKI

You could just stay here until the morning.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Morning?

Hesh

Mr Podski.

PODSKI

What?

HSHE  
Someone is coming this way.

PODSKI  
Oh no, not those two. We'll have to hide.

Hesh  
There's only one.

PODSKI  
Too late.

Off stage

MAn 1  
Hey. You guys. Stay put.

Enters  
I thought you were shot. What did ya do, rise up from the dead?

PODSKI  
Where's your friend?

Notices woman

MAn 1  
Hey we's bin lookin' for you. We thought you might have found somewhere to stay..

PODSKI  
I said where's your friend?

MAN 1  
He's not doing too good. Did you find a place to stay? You're looking pretty beat up.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS  
I got waylaid by a bunch of soldiers.

PODSKI  
What do you mean he's not doing too good?



MAN 1

He started choking. Said he had a pain in his chest.  
We need to get him to a doctor.

PODSKI

There are no doctors.

MAN 1

He's stuck in some ditch. You gotta help me get him  
out of there.

Hesh

I'll go.

PODSKI

No, you stay here. Look after her. Does he still have  
his gun?

MAN 1

He ain't in no condition to use it...

PODSKI

How far?

MAN 1

Not far...

They exit.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

So, what are you doing here?

Hesh

I ran away ma'am.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

From where?

Hesh

My uncle's house.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Why?

Hesh

There was nothing to keep me there.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

That's no reason. Don't you have parents?

Hesh

Not that I remember.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Well join the club. No past, only the present and an uncertain future.

Hesh

I like that. Would you like some more wine?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

No thanks.

Pause

It wasn't such a bad place that I came from.

Hesh

I've been there ma'am. There's a man there. He's hurt I think.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

The waiter? In a white uniform?

Hesh

Yes.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

That's Ben. The only one with something to do. The only one who was happy. He was hurt?

Hesh

He had a wound like Mr Podski.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

That'll be one of my nighthawks. Show me where you went. Oh yeah, I can see the light at the end. Strange, I can't remember crawling out.

Hesh

Will you go back there?

## WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I don't know. I felt I had so much more living to do.

She shouts down the hole.

Ben. Are you there? How are you? I heard you got shot. Do you need anything? A bandage? He needs a bandage.

To Hesh

Have you got a first aid kit?

Off stage

## PODSKI

He's breaking my back. Put him here. I got something to carry him on. Someone left it here after they picked up the bodies last week.

Get stretcher from back of hole.

Put him on this.

## MAN 1

Could you be a little more careful. He is my friend.

Podski and Man 1 enter dragging the body of Man 2 by the legs and place him on the stretcher.

Help me will you.

## PODSKI

He's blue. He's not breathing. I can't hear a heart beat.

## MAN 1

Give him some wine. Maybe that'll revive him.

## PODSKI

You're not wasting my wine on him.

To WIRD

You look at him. I say he's dead.

## WOMAN IN RED DRESS

He doesn't look too good.

MAN 1

But I heard him say something on the way back.

PODSKI

It was just air coming out of his lungs.

MAN 2

Gives a long gurgle. Chokes. Gurgles again. Stiffens.  
Relapses

MAN 1

He's havin' a heart attack. Do something.

PODSKI

He's purple. Perhaps he's got something stuck. Stick  
your finger down his throat.

MAN 1

Stick my finger down his throat? I ain't doin' that!

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Stop arguing and do something for the guy.

PODSKI

Open his mouth.

MAN 1

O.K.

PODSKI

Can you see anything?

MAN 1

There's a piece of cake.

PODSKI

Cake?

MAN 1

Yeah.. Cake.

PODSKI

What was he doing eating cake?

MAN 1

How should I know? Maybe he had it in his pocket.  
Maybe he stole it.

PODSKI

Well, get it out.

MAN 1

I can't do that.

PODSKI

He's your friend.

MAN 1

Look you ass hole. Don't start telling me what to do.

In the following trialogue the three character trip over each other's dialogue. Man 1 Man 2 address each other. The WIRD tries to mediate but gives up and addresses the audience. Hesh watches in bewilderment. He tugs on Podski's trousers a couple of times to distract him. The underlined words are where the next piece of dialogue begins,

POdski

Ass hole? Who you think you are calling an ass hole?  
This guy shot me and I went with you to rescue him.  
He came into my home and he shot me.

MAN 1

I spent a lot of time with this guy. He's my friend.  
I know he shot you but he thought you lied to him.

PODSKI

I didn't do anything.

WOMan in Red

What's the matter with you two. Can't you men do  
anything without arguing?

MAN 1

If you have a friend and you spend time with him then  
the least you can do is give him some assistance if  
he's in trouble.

WOMAN IN RED

I'm so sick and tired of having to listen to men rant about their damn friendships. If you treated women with the same respect you do your male friends perhaps there would be room for a little dialogue.

PODSKI

Did I do anything? No. Did you bother to ask any questions? No.

MAN 1

Then you don't understand friendship.

WOMAN IN RED

And perhaps there wouldn't be so much violence against women.

MAN 1

I'd stick my fingers down a guy's throat to help him.

WOMAN IN RED

If you're not beating each other up, you're beating up your children because they don't turn out the way you want them to.....

PODSKI

I don't call that a decent way to treat other people

WOMAN IN RED

..and then if you lose your job or someone questions the size of your dick, you start in on your wife or your girlfriend or anybody else that's standing around.

MAN 1

My parents brought me up to be loyal to my friends.

PODSKI

I don't ask for anything. I drink rainwater and eat mice if I have to but I survive and I enjoy my life. I don't push other people around.

MAN 1

Deep down a friend is the most important relationship you can have.

WOMAN IN RED

Don't you get it? You live in an eternal fog of your own egos....

PODSKI

You asked for help and I gave it.

WOMAN IN RED

..if you're not shooting something or someone, of fucking someone or stealing something from someone...

MAN 1

Forget parents and wives and children, of course you're going to have a relationship with them, but a friend is something far greater.

PODSKI

I don't see why I should have to put up with your insults...

WOMAN IN RED

Then you've got to have a therapist to tell you that your little life is O.K.

PODSKI

..or the body of your friend lying around in my front room upsetting my way of life.

MAN 1

It's about loyalty. It's about trust.

WOMAN IN RED

To hell with the damage you do!

PODSKI

He shit his pants. You can smell him from here.

MAN 1

Without trust, we're nobodies.

PODSKI

You can smell him from here.

WOMAN IN RED

I've had enough... You men think you're unique...but ...

MAN 1

You gotta be faithful. And I am faithful to the end.

PODSKI

He's dead I tell you. Dead as a Dodo.

MAN 1

I don't think he's dead.

WOMAN IN RED

Dodo?

PODSKI

You know what a dodo is?

WOMAN IN RED

Oh I'll tell you all about the dodo.

PODSKI

It's extinct. Like him.

MAN 1

I don't think he's dead. He's still alive.

PODSKI

You don't live on a battlefield and not know when someone is dead.

WOMAN IN RED

The dodos around here are men, redundant and almost extinct.

PODSKI

If he's your friend, you look after him.

MAN 1

When you're dead your eyes stay open.

PODSKI

Take the cake out of his throat.

WOMAN IN RED

I no more need a guy than I need a hole in my head.

PODSKI

Take him to YOUR house.



WOMAN IN RED

What I need is respect.

MAN 1

His eyes are closed.

WOMAN IN RED

I am not a dolled up object ready to serve your needs.

PODSKI

This is my hole and I do not take kindly to having dead bodies lying around.

MAN 1

I know this guy.

PODSKI

I try to keep the place clean.

WOMAN IN RED

I am a human being who deserves respect and to be listened to.

Hesh goes to the body of Man 2 and searches the pockets while the argument is going on. He finds the gun. He brings it out. Expertly check its mechanisms, takes off the safety catch, put a bullet into the chamber and as the argument reaches a crescendo he fires two shots into the air.

PODSKI

What the..?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Who...?

MAN 1

That's.....

Hesh

My uncle taught me about guns. He did not like arguments so I never argued with him. When he told me that I was neither fish nor fowl, I left.

PODSKI

Please put the gun down. Perhaps we all got a little overheated.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Your uncle was a creep!

Hesh

Mr Podski. Would you take the gun?

Podski takes the gun from him.

PODSKI

I think we need a plan.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I think we need to get the cake out of the man's throat.

She goes to the body. Reaches inside his mouth and pulls out a piece of cake. There's a sucking noise like the intake of breath.

MAN 2

Can somebody please help me. I'm not feeling too good.

MAN 1

They kept saying you were dead.

MAN 2

I want to go back to the picture. I don't like it out here. It's dirty and the air's no good. If I stay out here I'm gonna die.

MAN 1

We'll do what we have to do.

MAN 2

You've always been a good friend.

MAN 1

What did you say?

MAN 2

I said you always was a good friend.

MAN 1

You wanna go back to the picture?

MAN 2

Yeah..

MAN 1

It's good you're feelin' better. We got some wine here. You want some wine?

MAN 2

I'm having trouble breathing.

MAN 1

You're gonna be alright.

MAN 2

Can't seem to breath. Help me.

Man 2 grasps Man 1 by the arm.

MAN 1

Hey that hurts.

MAN 2

You gotta help me. I'm choking. Tell my story right. The rest is .....

MAN 1

What story? The rest is what?

He collapses.

PODSKI

You can't just leave him here.

MAN 1

We gotta take him back

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

I want to go back too ... there's no place like home... it's calm in the diner. Out here everything is so busy... too much happening...too many changes.

MAN 1

Yea?... funny.... I was thinking the same thing. It's a bit like a fart in a mitten around here ... yea ... frenetic, that's the word. Back there we were making plans. You felt secure.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

"Fart in a mitten"! You're a funny guy. Yes, we were making plans. You were trying to persuade me to come back to your apartment.

MAN 1

So I was. I thought you liked my friend though.

Indicates body of Man 2

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Not really. Anyway he's not much competition now.

MAN 1

Maybe he'll recover. Next time we could go back to my place instead of this dumbshit hole.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

That's not a bad idea.

PODSKI

Take your friend . I can't have him here.

MAN 1

All right. You never know. We could prop him up on his stool. Look. Let's drag him to the hole and drop him in. Come on you guys. That's it. Watch that arm. He's heavy. Hang on. We've nearly got him there.

They let Man 2 down into the hole. Looks down the hole.

What? Ben! There's been an accident.

Yea the other guy. I'm sorry you didn't like him. I'm sorry he shot you. The broad's fine. A little bit worse for wear. We got some stories for you. That's it. What? I'll ask. You haven't got a first aid kit have you?

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Yes. I'll get it.

MAN 1

Ben asks if we could get him some bourbon or something.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Is there any wine left?

PODSKI

Yes but.... I was..... Never mind. Here's some wine and the First Aid Kit.

WIRD handing the wine and the first aid kit to Man #1 who is half in and half our of hole.

WOMAN IN RED DRESS

Thanks. "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." "Here's looking at you kid". I like your politeness. Maybe you'll both "come down and see me sometime". "After all tomorrow is another day."

To Hesh

You two look after each other.

To Podski

"If you ever need me just whistle. You know how to whistle don't you Podski? You just put your lips together and blow."

Exit. There's a rumbling and a beam falls. WIRD goes down into hole

PODSKI

Gone. The hole's gone. I can't see anything. That's strange . Very strange.

Hesh

I am sorry about firing the gun.

PODSKI

That's all right. It did the trick. I saved the bread and the cheese and there's another bottle of wine. Get the boxes Hesh. We're going to celebrate. I even have a candle left.. It's beginning to get dark. And here are the railway passes. That's better. Not such a bad day after all. The stars are out. We'll use that as a table. Oh and I forgot. I've got something special. Something I kept. I've been saving these for just this sort of celebration.

He rummages in the back.

Napkins. Damask napkins. My mother's. Light the candle. There. The bread's still pretty fresh. The cheese. Oh the cheese it smells so good. This is beginning to look civilized. Hey Look at those stars.

Hesh

They're very beautiful.

PODSKI

Here , a glass of wine. Help yourself. Yes they're beautiful all right but they're no different to anything else.

Hesh

What do you mean Mr Podski?

PODSKI

Just bits and pieces of left over rubbish. Just like this hole.

Hesh

I don't understand.

PODSKI

Bits of left over light, millions of years old from stars long gone. Rocks and planets and matter floating around in time.

Hesh

They make me feel that I will live for ever. They are always there.

PODSKI

Maybe you will. In this moment. All those stars seem to be there but they're not. That's the great illusion. It's just a picture, a state of affairs. Here, another glass of wine.

Hesh

It's making me very tired Mr Podski.

PODSKI

You'll sleep well tonight. We'll both sleep well tonight. In the morning we will go to the railway station. Would you like that? I met a man today called Mr Wit who promised me a bath and to have his servants scrub my back. I am sure he'll let you have a bath too and have your back scrubbed.

Searches in his pockets

Look. Oh look! There's my book! I found it. Famous Last Words. A wonderfully amusing book. I haven't had a bath or my back washed in many many years.

Hesh

That would be nice. Mr Podski. Do you think he will be able to tell if I am fish or fowl? I would like to know. This wine makes me very sleepy. Will we catch a train?

He falls asleep

PODSKI

I think he is a very clever man though he called me a genius. If there are trains we shall go. But I shall be sorry to leave here. I'm used to it though when you think of it, one place ends up being very much like another. Better not waste the last candle.

Opens his book

I must think carefully about my last words.

Pause

Perhaps I'll just say "I've had a wonderful time."  
Yes, that sounds nice. I've had a wonderful time. A  
happy state of affairs. Time for a sleep. We'll get  
our stuff together in the morning. You and me. We'll  
go together. Let's go together. Let's go together.

He puts out candle. Blackout. There's a pause. From the  
distance the sounds of tank engines revving and moving out  
/sophisticated electronic communication. Voice over...

BLACKHAWK seven six this is REAPER five five, there  
are three vehicles moving toward your position with  
armed dismounts from sector seven.

REAPER five five this is BLACKHAWK seven six, there  
are no friendlies in that area, you are cleared hot  
to engage. Copy cleared HOT.

There is an explosion and light flash on stage.

BLACKHAWK seven six this is REAPER FIVE FIVE ,  
targets neutralized.

Good. Copy. I'm sending three EAGLES to asses the  
target.....

Pause the

Edward Hopper's Nighthawks slightly photoshopped is  
projected onto the back. Male 2's head is slumped over the  
counter.

Ben, the waiter has a bandaged arm, there's a large crack  
in the back wall and Male 1 has his arm around the Woman  
in Red. Sax music starts. Three bars. Remove photoshopped  
Nighthawks. Stop music

Lights up for curtain call. Music over "We'll meet  
again...." Softly in the background. Podski and Hesh  
remain in position. Man 1 Man 2 come out... bow go to  
position upstage centre .... Man 1 gets box and  
places it centre stage. WIR and WIT come on, bow  
take up position, Hesh comes to life bows goes into  
position, Podski emerges from rubbish takes bow,  
takes position as in photograph.



As soon as in position lights down - flash - lights up final bow off stage to front to shake hands on audience on their way out.

Picture of the group comes up on projection.

Blackout

END